

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03

INR-07 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02 CIEP-01

LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 L-02

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R 301736Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3791

INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ELAB, BE

SUBJECT: DEMONSTRATION BY SELF-EMPLOYED ADDS TO TINDEMAN'S  
GOVERNMENTS SOCIAL PROBLEMS

1. SUMMARY. SOME 5,000 SELF-EMPLOYED SHOPKEEPERS  
(INDEPENDENTS) DEMONSTRATED IN BRUSSELS APRIL 28 TO PROTEST  
RISING TAX BURDEN AND SOCIAL SECURITY PAYMENTS. GOVERNMENT  
WILL MEET WITH DELEGATION REPRESENTING ALL SEGMENTS OF  
SMALL EMPLOYERS AND SELF-EMPLOYED MAY 6 TO DISCUSS THEIR  
GRIEVANCES. THIS DEMONSTRATION FOLLOWED ANOTHER CARRIED  
OUT APRIL 26 IN BRUSSELS BY 1,500 NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS  
DEMANDING PAY EQUAL TO THAT OF NATIONAL POLICE (GENDARMERIE)  
WHILE THESE EVIDENCES OF DISSATISFACTION WITH THE  
TINDEMANS STEWARDSHIP DO NOT REPEAT NOT CONSITUTUE  
THREAT TO STABILITY OF GOVERNMENT, THEY COMPLICATE ITS  
EFFORTS TO STIMULATE BELGUM'S SAGGING ECONOMY WITHOUT  
GIVING WORRISOME INFLATION A FURTHER SHOVE. END SUMMARY.

2. GENERAL FEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT WORKERS  
(FGTI), ONE OF THREE BELGIAN ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING  
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SELF-EMPLOYED WORKERS AND SHOP KEEPERS,ORGANIZED

DEMONSTRATION APRIL 28 IN BRUSSELS TO PUT PRESSURE ON GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE IMMEDIATE RELIEF FROM INCREASING TAX BURDEN AND SOCIAL SECURITY PAYMENTS LEVIED ON SELF-EMPLOYED. DEMONSTRATION WAS DESIGNED TO BUILD PRESSURE PRIOR TO MAY 6 MEETING OF GOVERNMENT WITH COMMITTEE REPRESENTING ALL ORGANIZATIONS OF SELF-EMPLOYED.

3. ON APRIL 26 SOME 1,500 NON-COMMISSIONED MILITARY OFFICERS HELD A MASS MEETING IN BRUSSELS TO PROTEST FACT THAT THEY RECEIVE LESS PAY THAN IS ACCORDED EQUIVALENT POSITIONS IN THE NATIONAL POLICE. ALL UNITS OF ARMED FORCES WERE REPRESENTED IN THIS DEMONSTRATION SPONSORED BY TRADE UNION OF CAREER MILITARY (CSM) WHICH IS AFFILIATED TO SMALL LIBERAL LABOR CENTER (CGSLB).

4. GOVERNMENT ALSO FACES CONTINUING NEGOTIATIONS IN PUBLIC SECTOR WITH TEACHERS WHO HAVE THREATENED ONE DAY GENERAL STRIKE IN FIRST HALF OF MAY.

5. COMMENT: AGITATION BY INDEPENDENTS AND CAREER MILITARY ADD TO GOVERNMENT'S CURRENT PROBLEMS IN LABOR FIELD. ELSEWHERE, UNIONS IN PUBLIC SECTOR HAVE LEVELED DEMANDS FOR WAGE INCREASES AND OTHER BENEFITS. TO DEAL WITH UNSATISFACTORY UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION, GOVERNMENT HAS FELT COMPELLED TO OPEN DISCUSSIONS WITH TRADE UNIONS AND EMPLOYERS ON A PROPOSAL FOR A PUBLIC INVESTMENT PROGRAM TO STIMULATE ECONOMY AND CREATE JOBS. SPIRIT OF LABOR MILITANCY IS HEIGHTENED BY FACT THAT RIVAL NATIONAL LABOR CENTERS ARE CURRENTLY COMPETING IN TRADE UNION ELECTIONS, WHICH HAVE JUST BEGUN IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

6. ALL THIS MEANS THAT PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS, JUST BACK FROM CHINA, WILL BE COMPELLED TO TURN HIS ATTENTION TO BREAD-AND-BUTTER DOMESTIC ISSUES, PARTICULARLY SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INEQUITIES WHICH PREOCCUPY VARIOUS BELGIAN INTEREST GROUPS. WHILE THESE PROBLEMS DO NOT POSE THREAT TO SURVIVAL OF GOVERNMENT, THEY COMPLICATE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE TINDEMANS COALITION'S EFFORT TO CONTROL INFLATION AND YET FLATTEN OUT THE STILL-RISING UNEMPLOYMENT CURVE. FIRESTONE

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## Message Attributes

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